

LB 41

.W 2

1863.

LB 41
.W2
Copy 1

F. A. Packard

AN

*LB 41
.W2*

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ALUMNI OF HARVARD COLLEGE,

JULY 16, 1863.

By JAMES WALKER, D.D.



CAMBRIDGE:

SEVER AND FRANCIS.

1863.

AN
ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE
ALUMNI OF HARVARD COLLEGE,

JULY 16, 1863.

By JAMES WALKER, D.D.



CAMBRIDGE:
SEVER AND FRANCIS.
1863.

LB41
W2

~~26.5~~
~~5051~~

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863, by
SEVER AND FRANCIS,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

NEW YORK PUBL. LIBR.
IN EXCHANGE.

UNIVERSITY PRESS:
WELCH, BIGELOW, AND COMPANY,
CAMBRIDGE.

A D D R E S S .

MR. PRESIDENT AND BRETHREN OF THIS ASSOCIATION : —

I AM called to address you at a time when men's minds are anxiously turned on the unsettled state of our public affairs. This, however, is neither the occasion nor the place for discussing the different policies proposed, or even for urging the common grounds of a devoted attachment to the Union and loyalty to the government. Still I cannot find it in my heart entirely to thrust aside the all-engrossing question of the moment, What can we do for our country ?

There are many public duties and sacrifices incumbent on all good citizens alike, whether educated or not. Again, there are others especially incumbent on educated men, in their capacity as educated men ; that is to say, in the very capacity in which we, as Alumni of Harvard College, are assembled here.

Some may think that the distinction here referred to loses most of its significance in a community like ours, where all are educated, and where, as it would seem to follow, there can be no such thing as an

educated *class*, properly so called. But this comes from not reflecting that education, like wealth or goodness, or any other human acquisition or gift, is relative. The question is not between those who know nothing and those who know everything, but between those who know less and those who know more. Still there are those who may be called educated men by way of distinction, just as there are those who may be called rich men or good men by way of distinction.

In saying this, I would not be understood to make too much of colleges. There was a time when colleges and universities could claim something like a monopoly of learning; but it is not so now. The only valid defence of such institutions at the present day is, that they bring together, and combine and use under the most favorable circumstances, the best means for the highest culture of the age. Even in this respect, however, as all must see, the improved condition of our preparatory and professional schools, together with the multiplication of books, and the establishment of scientific collections and learned societies, has done not a little to supply the place of colleges. Why wonder, then, that many whose names are among the most distinguished in modern letters and modern science should be unable to boast of what is called a liberal education? All honor to such men. In common parlance, a liberal education still means a college education, and a college education still means a liberal education; but names are not

things. What alone is necessary even to high scholarship is, that a man should be liberally educated in point of fact,—no matter how or where.

Assuming, then, that we have an educated class, whose special function it is to think, to study, to know, I return to the question, What has the country a right to expect from this class, as a class?

It is the fashion in some quarters to make light of such inquiries, on the ground that the world is not governed by great scholars or great men, but by great ideas. Great ideas are the only reality; great men do not exist, except by virtue of representing them. Now there can be no doubt that an important truth glimmers through mystical expressions of this sort. I hope I shall not be suspected of forgetting or undervaluing the power of great ideas to raise man above himself, to lift up a whole community, to impress a new character on an age or race. But can you have great ideas without great minds to conceive them, to comprehend them, to impress them on others,—at least, in the first instance? No student of history or of human nature will expect great ideas to be generated in men acting together in masses; they always spring up in single gifted or inspired minds. Nor is this all. We talk about great ideas, as if they would save us; but let us understand ourselves. What we want are, not men whom great ideas have mastered, but men who know how to master great ideas. We do not want men made heady by ideas

which are too much for them ; nor men seized upon and run away with by a single idea ; nor yet men who take up a most respectable idea, and press it into shapes and push it into consequences which make sensible and practical persons ashamed of it, or afraid of it.

I admit the presence and power of great ideas ; but this makes a class of highly educated men only so much the more necessary, to see to it that these ideas are true as well as great, and that they are rightly understood and rightly applied. There have been times when party spirit and party rancor were more intense than now, but never when the questions at issue were so profound, so radical, so far-reaching. And these questions are not reserved, as was once the practice, for the schools ; the discussion is not locked up in a dead language, known only to a privileged few ; everybody is expected to take part in it. You can hardly open a magazine or a newspaper which does not bring into notice some of these great ideas, some novel and startling doctrine which is thought by many to strike at the very foundations of religion and government, and even of human nature itself. Alarmists will tell you that the world is coming to an end. What, then, are we to do ? Even the great leaders of thought on the progressive side are beginning to betray uneasiness at what they have styled a tendency to intellectual anarchy in modern society. But if this is so, what, I ask again, are we to do ?

The nature of the evil suggests, as it seems to

me, what must, in general, be the nature of the remedy. We want what will take the place, and have some at least of the effects, of old-fashioned authority. It is a consciousness of this want, more or less distinctly apprehended, which gives rise, from time to time, to reactionary movements, especially in politics and religion, — republicans leaning to monarchy, and Protestants going back to Rome. But reactionary movements seldom come to anything, and for an obvious reason. Such is the complexity and mutual interdependence of causes and effects in social physics, that you cannot go back in one without going back in all. If you would have the authority of the Middle Ages as a reality and not as a sham, you must have the Middle Ages entire. The law would seem to be, that every new condition of society develops a new set of tendencies, and at the same time a new set of checks and balances, these new checks and balances being the only ones that can be sincerely or effectively applied. In a moment of panic, all parties may concur in a seeming restoration of the old securities; but it will sooner or later appear that there is a world of difference between really believing and making believe. You cannot reproduce the past; revolutions go not backward. Accordingly, a wise conservatism, instead of wasting its energies in a vain attempt to revive an obsolete form of authority, will seek rather to make the most of its modern substitute. And if you ask me what the modern substitute is, I am at no loss for a reply. It is an

enlightened public opinion, sustained by the great body of educated men, and directed and enforced by the highest intelligence in the community.

And let no one feel or affect concern lest authority under this new form will have the same effect in arresting or obstructing human progress as authority under its old form. What made the latter so objectionable in this regard was, its being not merely authority, but authority without liberty, authority without liberty to alter itself,—a fixed and dead authority. Of course, under such a state of things, there could be no progress either with the educated or the uneducated; but the moment the *leading minds* were set free, progress began, and began with *them*. Authority, however, meaning thereby personal influence founded on superior attainments, did not cease; it simply became a free, living, progressive, self-asserting authority. The leading minds in every department of inquiry were still looked up to as being in advance of the rest, because they *were* in advance of the rest; and it is mainly through such minds, and the influence they have exerted, individually and collectively, that human progress has been so wonderfully accelerated in modern times. “True,” some will say, “but this is the work of a new principle; it is the work of teaching, of education.” Be it so. What, however, is teaching or education, understood in this large sense, but the power which those who know more exert over those who know less? And what, again, is this power, but authority, or, at any rate, its modern substitute?

Still I do not shut my eyes on a real difficulty that comes up in this connection. Error may be taught as well as truth, and not only error, but pernicious error; and in looking to educated men, as a body, to save us from this evil, I must not forget that educated men are, and always have been, the principal offenders. For proof of this, we need not go back, as is usual, to the Greek sophists, nor even to the French philosophers of the last century: it is so now and here. What scientific or theoretical vagary can be named, what political extravagance, what license or folly in social life, which did not originate in the scheming brain of some real or would-be scholar? What attack is ever made on law, which is not headed by some recreant lawyer? or on medicine, which is not headed by some recreant physician? or on religion, which is not headed by some recreant religious teacher? Reputations are also made, and, I may add, easily made, in this way. I remember being once consulted by a young man about the choice of a profession, and, becoming a little impatient of a manifest craving for effect out of all proportion to his abilities, I was tempted to say: "Well, if you will be a great man at all events, I would advise you to commit some outrageous act; or if you are not quite prepared for that, I would advise you to begin by vilifying the Constitution of the United States, or, what perhaps would be better still, attack Christianity."

I am sorry to be obliged to make these concessions; but, after all, how far do they go? At the

worst, only to this, that the educated class, as a class, contains the common proportion of ambitious, selfish, and unprincipled men. Knowledge is not virtue, but power; why wonder, then, that it should sometimes be perverted and abused, like every other power? Often, however, it is not necessary to suppose deliberate and purposed wrong; it may be a strong constitutional propensity, — something in the blood, in the bones. Macaulay says of Howe, a factious member of the British Parliament, that he “was what is vulgarly called a disinterested man; that is to say, he valued money less than the pleasure of venting his spleen, and of making a sensation.” Such men are found everywhere, at least in all free communities, — men who are cursed with a passion to be forever meddling, forever before the public; with whom, therefore, it is as natural to be visionaries and disorganizers as to breathe. They may be educated, or not: when educated, however, nobody would think to account for their conduct by saying, it was because of their education; it would be much more reasonable to say, it was in spite of it.

The only cases of much difficulty are those in which a considerable proportion of the educated men of a country, through their tendencies and sympathies as educated men, are sometimes betrayed into unnatural alliances and extreme measures, as in the first French Revolution. Even, however, in that memorable instance, we must not forget how much was due to the crimes and follies of the governing powers in church and state, and to the distemper of

the times. Above all, we must distinguish between the movement itself and the excesses to which it led. As the Reign of Terror drew near, the educated revolutionists, with their fine theories and humanities, began to feel themselves to be in a false, as well as a dangerous position ; and hence the hopeless and imbecile manner in which they succumbed before the coarse and brutal power they had helped to inaugurate. What more melancholy or more instructive, in this respect, than the fate of the Girondist party, and the last days of Condorcet ?

When, therefore, it is said that educated men are at the bottom of most of the extravagances and disorders and impieties of the day, the statement is to be taken, if taken at all, in a very restricted and qualified sense. Even when they happen to be educated men, they are in a false position ; they do not act in their proper character as educated men. So far from being the class, they do not even so much as represent the class, and therefore the class is not responsible for what they do. At the same time, as the public really suffers, directly or indirectly, from the fact that the offenders in question are understood to belong to the class, it is, as it seems to me, a new reason, and a new obligation, why the whole class, as a class, should do what they can to prevent or remedy the evil.

Here, however, another objection is suggested. I am expecting educated men to act together as a class ; to create and sustain a public opinion, which supposes them to act in concert. But how can this

be ? Educated men, even the best of them, are not of one mind ; no, not even on questions generally accounted most vital and fundamental. They are of all the great schools in philosophy, of all the great parties in politics, of all the great sects in religion. In one word, educated men, even the best of them, differ among themselves quite as much as uneducated men, and even more. And so perhaps they do in some respects ; but what then ? It follows, indeed, that they are not likely to agree in all their doctrines and theories ; that is to say, in all the conclusions arrived at ; still, nothing hinders their agreeing, at least generally and substantially, in the manner and spirit in which every inquiry should be conducted. We are speaking of liberally educated men, and of men who are so called, not from the amount of information they have acquired, but from the fact that their minds have been enlarged and liberalized in acquiring it. The information, and the opinions founded on it, will probably not be the same in any two individuals, but the enlargement and liberality of mind will be, or at least ought to be, common to all. Here, then, we have a common and distinguishing property of educated men as a class, affording them ample ground for sympathy and co-operation in a multitude of ways, and for a multitude of objects, notwithstanding their differences.

Unless all our boasting about the influence of study and high culture on the mind and character is mere arrogance or mere cant, there must be many subjects on which the great body of educated men,

of whatever sect or party, must feel and think together. Again, therefore, I say, it is to a public opinion founded on this agreement as far as it goes, and everywhere honestly and fearlessly expressed, that we are to turn as one of the great regulative principles of modern society.

Nowhere is this regulative principle more needed than among a people living under institutions like ours, and in times like ours. To the question, then, What can we, as educated men, do for our country? I reply, Much every way; with this to recommend it, that what we do will be chiefly felt, not in practical life, where the nation is the strongest, but in intellectual life, where it is unquestionably the weakest.

With respect to the great majority of educated men, the danger is from indifference and remissness. Dark as the prospect is, I cannot help thinking that our public affairs would soon begin to wear a different aspect, if the wisest and best men among us would everywhere awake to their duty, as the great moderating and regulating power in a free state. In times like these, is it right, is it safe, is it manly, for those who ought to exert a controlling influence in the community, to look on, carping and grumbling at what others do, without even so much as attempting to do anything themselves? Office is not essential in any country, and least of all in this country, to a wide social and political sway. It is given to but few to found empires, to institute laws, to discover principles,—to do anything, in short,

which will materially enlarge the boundaries of human thought or activity; but all can contribute something to secure or restore a sound and healthy state of public opinion. And this is precisely what is most needed now and here. The universal spread of a modicum of knowledge has effected a change in the action of the public mind, which, if it is not balanced and regulated by other changes, will lead to as much harm as good. The ubiquity of the schoolmaster, if it has not turned us all into *reasonable* beings, has turned us all into *reasoning* beings. The people demand to know the *why* and the *wherefore* of things. All authority, all legislation, all instruction for which a satisfactory reason cannot be given, and is not given, seems struck with irremediable impotence. There is no real foundation for the complaint sometimes made, that the multitude, while they refuse to follow good authority, are ready enough to follow bad. They are not misled by authority, good or bad, in the common acceptance of that term, but by sophistical reasonings, by false or garbled statements, by passionate and one-sided declamation, — the whole often resulting in a sincere wrong-headedness, which it is the business of the better-informed to set right.

Guidance — cool, wary, far-seeing guidance — is the great want and the great duty of the hour. When men lived and died in the opinions and practices to which they were born, they were obviously in no danger of falling into *new* errors. And not only so. Their traditionary opinions and practices

might be right, or might be wrong ; but, at any rate, the institutions of society had become so adjusted to them as to make them consistent with order. Widely different are the times on which we have fallen. The people are everywhere expecting, waiting for, and ready to welcome whatever purports to be the latest revelation of truth and duty. Under these circumstances, to abandon them to shallow or sinister or mad counsels, is to put religion, society, law, property, everything at risk. Accordingly, it will not do for educated men to go on thinking only of themselves and their families, consulting only their own tastes or their own ease ; they must think of the public, and be ready to labor for it, and make sacrifices to it. Self-interest itself dictates this course. The fate of every one of us, the uses and pleasures of professional success and high social position, all your dreams of happy years to come, and the prospects of your children after you, are wrapped up in the fate of our common country. To save our country, therefore, in this season of her utmost peril, should be our first care.

And this, as intimated before, must be mainly through our agency as the great moderating and regulating force of society. I do not forget that educated men belong to different parties, and are committed to different policies ; but has it come to this, that parties and policies are everything, and the country nothing ? There are two ways in which a thoroughly consistent member of a party

may hope to serve his country, — either by the influence he exerts on other parties, or by the influence he exerts on his own party. Much less is to be expected from the former than is generally supposed, and for an obvious reason. In civil dissensions of long standing, each party gradually works itself up to an entire conviction that truth and right and humanity are on its side. So confident is this assumption, so intense this feeling, that any attempt on the part of opponents to put it down by argument, or by ridicule, or by contemptuous insinuations, or by menace, seldom has any other effect than to strengthen it, and turn it into rage. But it is not so with the influence which the example and sober counsels of a man of weight and intelligence are likely to have on his own party, on those who in most things go with him.

An English statesman of the last century, speaking from personal experience, has told us that “the heads of parties are like the heads of snakes, carried on by their tails.” I do not think this description applies very generally to parties in this country: sometimes I almost wish it did, for I still have faith in the strong practical sense of the masses. With us, for the last twenty or thirty years, the principal danger has arisen from the fact that the leadership of parties has fallen, at least to a considerable extent, into the hands of two classes of men, — the mere politician, who thinks only of party ascendancy, and the mere theorist, who thinks only of pushing through some pet measure, or some pet system, — a

state of things affording abundant opportunity and temptation for any amount of corrupt bargaining. Now, if the great body of educated men could be induced to act with sufficient energy and decision, I feel sure they would put themselves in opposition to this tendency. They would make it their first care, each one to make his own party what it ought to be ; that is to say, to bring it under the influence of its best minds, of the highest and soundest statesmanship it can boast. Thus, though acting in different parties, they might still be said to act together ; for they would act in the same general spirit, and for the same general result, — namely, to make all parties more loyal and more patriotic.

And again I say, selfishness itself dictates this course. Without going at all into the question whose fault it is, or whether anybody is in fault, it is certainly to be regretted that the present war has not been carried on in a way to unite all parties at the North. What is the use of trying to shut our eyes on the fact, that a divided people are struggling to preserve the life of a great nation ? To expect that either party, with all its jealousies and antipathies in a flame, will give up its convictions and preferences to the other, is simply absurd. Unless, therefore, in this extremity, the leading minds in the community are willing to work day and night, and work together, each one to keep his own party from extreme or from factious measures, it seems to me that our best hope under God — I will not say our last — is gone.

Here probably I shall be met by the plea, so common of late years in this country, "The people do not wish, and will not accept, our services. Even our own party will not listen to us." Some, indeed, have gone so far as to put this on general grounds, making it to be the natural and necessary result of democratical institutions. A republic, they say, is no place for men of eminence and distinction in anything, for men much above or much below the common standard: it is the paradise of *average men*. Now in what sense, and how far, is this statement true? Unquestionably, in a republic rightly conducted, the bulk of the community are more likely to be well cared for than under any other form of government; and the reason is, that they take care of themselves. But how do they take care of themselves, so far, I mean, as their relations to the state are concerned? Simply by electing able and honest men for this purpose. If from any cause they fail to do so, no matter whether from the dearth of such men, or from perversely choosing inferior men, it is certain that the republic will soon cease to be a paradise for anybody. The paradise of average men! I am not asking for sagacious and thoroughly instructed statesmen, that they may use the people, but that the people may use them; and to suppose the people unwilling to use them is to suppose them to have lost their senses on one subject, while they retain them on all others. Did you ever hear of a man, in serious difficulty as to his property or reputation or life, looking round to find an "average"

lawyer to help him out of it? Did you ever hear of a parish advertising for an "average" minister, or of a great corporation for an "average" actuary or superintendent? Yet this would be wisdom itself, compared with committing the vast and complicated concerns of a great commonwealth to incompetent, or even to average hands, to persons with no peculiar fitness or training for their special task.

Be this, however, as it may, it does not alter the facts in the case. We shall still be pressed with the question, "Is it not true that every republic, including our own, has manifested a growing distrust of the highest ability in candidates for the highest places?" I suppose we must answer, Yes; but with two important qualifications. In the first place, it is not the people, left to themselves, who thus desert their great leaders, but the people practised upon and cajoled by the politicians. And, in the second place, this desertion, however brought about, is often more apparent than real. Much of what is said about the triumph of *availability* over *merit* relates exclusively to electioneering tactics, and the scramble for office: after all, the people know the difference between them, and show it in a thousand ways. In office or out of office, a great statesman is a great power in the state.

One word more. Many who believe in the importance of a wise and able statesmanship, do not readily see what connection statesmanship has with scholarship. "We do not want bookish men," they

will say ; “ we do not want dreamers or theorists or doctrinaires. We want men of sound, practical judgment ; and such men are much more likely to be bred up in the active walks of life than in colleges.”

It is the old feud between practical men and speculative men, — a feud which owes whatever vitality it retains to an unwillingness to make the necessary discriminations. The order and progress of society do not depend on men of action any more than on men of thought, nor on men of thought any more than on men of action ; they depend equally and alike on both. You cannot govern an empire, or build a ship, or make a pin, without availing yourselves at the same time of the results of study and of the results of experience. We want practical men, and we want speculative men ; in their respective provinces, both are indispensable, the only danger being that one will invade the province of the other. Let the man of books, let the mere student, let the man of speculation, as such, confine himself to his legitimate and special province ; and this, when stated in a broad and general way, is, as I suppose all will agree, the province of ideas.

So far, all is plain. But the problems we thus solve in our closets are seldom, if ever, the problems we are called upon to solve in real life. We separate things in our reasonings, and treat them as entirely distinct, which, however, are almost never separated in fact. Where will you find a scholar who is nothing but a scholar ? Consider, too, what

are called the learned professions, including statesmanship. Each supposes, at the same time and in the same person, the knowledge which study gives, and the knowledge which practice gives. Thus the great theorist becomes the great organizer, the great administrator; yet even in such cases, in his capacity of theorist, he uses one set of faculties, and is governed by one set of rules; and in his capacity of organizer and administrator he uses another set of faculties, and is governed by another set of rules. Accordingly, we may still say, as before, that the proper business of the *mere* scholar is to take care of the ideas of the community, and that he has no right to intermeddle with its practical relations, or with its institutions, until, to his knowledge of books, however profound, he has superadded a knowledge of affairs.

What, then, is the conclusion to which we are brought? Not, surely, that we should have dreamers or visionaries or mere theorists to rule over us. If there is a practical thing under heaven, it is civil government,—to be framed and administered on practical principles,—that is to say, with a constant reference to what is best, not perhaps in itself, but in the circumstances. For this reason, the first requisite in persons who are to fill important posts is unquestionably a sound, practical judgment, trained by experience in actual public service. But it does not follow that statesmanship is to be classed with the trades or crafts, and not with the liberal professions. It is still a liberal profes-

sion, which supposes the business to be understood in its principles as well as in its application, and the whole to be based on a broad general culture. No doubt single and rare instances have occurred of genius or native aptitude for affairs, which seemed to dispense with the necessity of previous training. Yet, even in such cases, I suspect that one of two things usually happens. Either the previous training is really acquired, though in peculiar and rapid ways, or else the statesmanship itself wants finish and completeness, perhaps, indeed, is nothing but the vulgar counterfeit, political cunning.

Whether the general and preliminary culture which forms the scholarly element in accomplished statesmanship be obtained in colleges, or elsewhere, is, as before intimated, immaterial. But I owe it to the place and the occasion to insist, that what colleges aim to do is precisely what is here required. In other words, they use study, not merely or mainly as a means of information, but to exercise and develop and strengthen the whole mind, and prepare it for the highest work. At any rate, there cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose that it is the tendency of colleges to make dreaming and theorizing politicians. How has it been in England? Her colleges are more faithful than any other to scholastic traditions, and it is under such influences that most of her public men have been trained. Now I am not going to pronounce a eulogy on English statesmen. Very likely they are chargeable with a multitude of

faults and defects ; one thing, however, is plain, they are neither visionaries nor pedants. For a long period, and amidst great excitements, they have shown themselves to be singularly cautious and practical. While the rest of Europe has been convulsed with revolution after revolution, to very little purpose, England alone has steadily held on her course, the government becoming more and more popular ; not, however, according to any theory of abstract right, but as the way was prepared for it by the existing state of things, or by the indications of Providence. In one word, they have acted on the principle,—not a bad one, as it seems to me,—that there is no real and solid progress but growth, and no unerring reformer but God.

After all, the best illustration of what I have said is found in the history of our own College. This institution, as you all know, did not originate in love of learning for its own sake, but in concern for the commonwealth. In the language of the day, it was “for the better discharge of our trust for the next generation, and so to posterity, being the first founders do wear away apace, and that it grows more and more difficult to fill places of most eminence as they are empty or wanting.” Every new charter proposed, every new application for aid, sets forth the same reason in almost the same words ; it is always “that persons of known worth may thus, by the blessing of Almighty God, be educated and better fitted for

public employments, both in Church and in the civil state."

The pledge implied in such statements, as I suppose all will admit, has been, at least in some good measure, redeemed. You will meet with but few individuals of much note in our colonial history, after the first generation, who were not Alumni of Harvard. Some of them, when the difficulties with the mother country arose, adhered to the Royalist side; but not so the College itself. Long before that question began to be agitated, Dr. Colman, who was a member of the Corporation, wrote to a friend in England, "If I am able to judge, no place of education can boast a more *free air* than our little College may." It was the breathing of this "free air" which gave the country such men as James Otis, Samuel and John Adams, and Jonathan Mayhew. On this point, friends and foes would seem to have been of one mind. Thus, Governor Hutchinson complains that the College threw its whole weight and influence, from the beginning, into the popular cause. On the other hand, Governor Hancock takes occasion to compliment the College as being, "in some sense, the parent and nurse of the late happy Revolution." Again, John Adams writes to one of his correspondents in 1790, "Your Boston town-meetings and our Harvard College have set the universe in motion." About the same time, Lord Cornwallis, who had occasion to know something of our affairs, said to a Massachusetts man in India, "The early establishment of your College

hastened the American Revolution half a century." I do not suppose that expressions like these are to be taken to the letter. Nevertheless, they show, beyond doubt or cavil, what was the general impression at the time,—an impression, I may add, strikingly justified by the fact, that the five delegates from this State, whose names are enrolled among the immortal signers of the Declaration of Independence, were all sons of Harvard.

Since that time, we have become merged in a great nation, and colleges have sprung up everywhere. Of course, in this altered state of things, our own College, though it has grown into the character and proportions of a University, has lost more or less of the *prestige* it once had as the place of education for public men. Even in this respect, however, and looking only to the highest national and State offices, the statistics furnished by the Triennial will show that we have no reason to be dissatisfied with the record. I find there the names of twenty-one Delegates to the American Congress under the Confederation; of two Presidents and two Vice-Presidents of the United States; of twenty-seven Senators and one hundred and ten Representatives in Congress; of three Justices of the Federal Supreme Court; of six Cabinet Secretaries, and two Attorney-Generals; of fourteen Ministers or Envoys Extraordinary to foreign countries, six of whom were to England; of ten Governors of Massachusetts, and seven of other States.

Those men, I hardly need say, were of every

variety of mind and character. Still it is easy to see that their influence has been prevailingly in one direction, and that it has been a moderating and regulating influence. Hence a common objection to the College, that it was for liberty before the Revolution, and for law afterwards, — progressive in the beginning, conservative in the end. But even if this were true to a much greater extent than it is, it would not argue either defection or inconsistency. A wise man does not give himself to liberty exclusively, nor to law exclusively; he gives himself to both, and to that one especially which is most in danger at the time.

Time would fail me to speak of the eminent men who have carried into a long life of public service the principles and the spirit inculcated here. I cannot speak as I would even of him who has so many titles to our notice on this occasion, who stands alone for his years, and for the veneration that is felt for him, — chiefly known to this generation as the honored head of the University, but long before that, and long before a large proportion of this audience were born, actively and earnestly engaged in matters of state, — the scholar, the statesman, and the patriot. He has lived to see the best and the worst days of the Republic, and *still* lives, — may we not hope, in order that his last look may be on his country redeemed and renovated by the trials through which it is now passing, and with every vestige of rebellion and bondage swept away?

And let no one dream that public virtue and devotion to country are principles which are dying out in this place. We have referred to what the fathers did ; let us now see what the children are doing. When the Southern insurgents took up arms against the freest and best government on earth, and it became necessary to repel force by force, the recent graduates of this College, and some who had not yet graduated, were among the first to obey the call. More than four hundred and fifty of our number either now are, or have been, in the loyal service, — probably as large a quota, after the proper deductions are made, as any other considerable class of citizens has furnished. It was presumed that their education would be of advantage to them, so far as intelligence and personal influence were required ; but it has been of advantage to them in other ways. It has given a substance and body to their characters, which only needed the inspiration of a lofty purpose in order to become the foundation of the highest courage, and even of great powers of physical endurance. They went because they were called. It was not military glory, nor political ambition, nor schemes of reform, which moved them, but an inflexible purpose to preserve the integrity of a great nation, and maintain the supremacy of the laws. How they have performed this duty, appears from the large and constantly increasing number of those who have fallen at their posts. Our necrology for the past year reveals the remarkable fact, that one half of the deaths have occurred in the public ser-

vice. It has been sorrow and desolation to many hearts and many homes ; but it will make the name of Harvard dear to every patriot in the land.

Alas that so many young lives, the hope of the country, should be cut off in their early promise ! But with the longest life, what better, what more, could they have done ? Sooner or later a monument will be erected in the College grounds to commemorate their heroism. Do not cover it over with a glorification of our institutions, or of our people, or even with a studied eulogy on the dead : thus to have offered up their lives is glory enough. Write on it these few simple words : “ In memory of the Sons of Harvard who died for their country.” And there let it stand, among the good and gracious influences of the place, the best and most gracious of them all. There let it stand. While your children and your children’s children are here preparing themselves for life, it will teach them that the pursuit of pleasure, the blandishments of society, and literary rivalships are poor things, when compared with devotion to principle. There let it stand. If under the influence of great material prosperity, or in the hard competitions of the world, the public heart should again grow cold, and educated men forget their duty, it will still teach the same lesson. In all coming time, when the Alumni of this College revisit, as we do to-day, the scenes of their early studies and friendships, the old feeling will be revived, and, touched by the inspiration of a noble example, they will renew their vows to be faithful to their country and the laws.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 022 138 853 7



any
e



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 022 138 853 7